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Adams Announces New Sponsors of the Local Farmer Act

Alma Adams Press [sam.spencer@mail.house.gov]

Sent: Friday, November 20, 2020 7:57 AM

To: [Steve Johnston](#)

Adams Announces New Sponsors of the Local Farmer Act

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In August of 2020, **Congresswoman Alma S. Adams, Ph.D. (NC-12)**, Vice Chair of the House’s Committee on Agriculture, introduced the ***Local and Regional Farmer and Market Support Act (Local Farmer Act)*** to help save the farmers, farms, and families hardest hit by COVID-19. The ***Local Farmer Act*** would address concerns about these farmers by targeting aid directly to local and regional food producers and markets as they cope with the economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

This week, **Reps. Pingree, Schrier, Langevin, Khanna, Blumenauer, Gabbard, San Nicolas, and Kaptur** have signed on as co-sponsors of this critical legislation.

“I’m proud to be joined by my colleagues in support of the *Local and Regional Farmer and Market Support Act*, which would target pandemic aid directly to local and regional producers and markets, with specific support built-in for farmers of color and minority-owned markets, to help them weather the continued impacts of COVID-19,” **said Vice Chair Adams**. “This legislation continues to be urgent because small and mid-sized farms, especially those operated by Black, Indigenous and other farmers of color, have been among those hardest hit by COVID-19. Any upcoming COVID-19 relief package must include help for these farmers and the local farmers markets and they depend on.”

The ***Local Farmer Act*** would:

- Create an alternative coronavirus relief payment program for farmers that sell in local and regional markets based on their historic revenue, rather than price loss;
- Ensure that these COVID-19 relief payments cannot be used by USDA to repay farmers’ outstanding FSA loans;
- Provide emergency response grants for farmers markets and local food enterprises to implement public health protections and coronavirus-smart marketing practices;
- Provide emergency response grants to direct marketing farmers

to help them respond to shifting markets and adopt new socially-distant practices and sales models;

- Provide more equitable distribution of relief funds so that farmers of color and small farms get the funds they need to survive; and
- Provide robust outreach and technical assistance to BIPOC farmers and ranchers.

[A link to a summary of the bill is available here.](#)

The Local Farmer Act is supported by the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association, the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund, the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, and North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services.

“I support this initiative to help our farmers and farmers markets, including small and minority farmers, especially as we have seen an increasing consumer interest in locally sourced foods,”

said **Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler**. “Local markets are essential food sources in many communities and are important sales venue for farmers. This bill would help ensure they can remain open and operate within COVID-19 guidelines and recommendations.”

“The small farms that provide our communities healthy food at farmers markets, independent restaurants, and schools are the backbone of our local food economies,” said **Roland**

McReynolds, Executive Director of the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association. “The Local Farmer Act will help these farmers and ranchers stay in business and continue to nourish us all through this crisis.”

According to Carolina Farm Stewardship’s [Survey](#), over seventy-five percent of small farms in the Carolinas have seen their revenue decline due to COVID-19, including more than one-third whose sales dropped more than \$1,000 per week.

“The viability of Black-owned farms and cooperatives depends largely on direct marketing in local and regional farmers markets. COVID-19 has caused many of these farmers markets to close, disproportionately impacting Black farmers and cooperatives. Many of our farmers and their cooperatives will not survive under current market conditions.

For those who survive this pandemic, the economic recovery will be a long one requiring policymakers to specifically target support programs which are intentional and inclusive,” said **Cornelius Blanding, Executive Director, Federation of Southern Cooperatives/ Land Assistance Fund**. “We are grateful to Congresswoman Adams for introducing legislation which will stabilize local and regional farmers markets while ensuring that socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers get the technical assistance they need to retool and create marketing opportunities during COVID-19.”

“Farmers and ranchers have been under intense stress and facing market uncertainty for months during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and Representative Adams recognizes that Congress must step up to help. This bill recognizes the need for more effective, targeted aid that meets the real needs of the producers and local food businesses working hard to feed their communities right now,” said **Eric Deeble, Policy Director for the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition**.

Congresswoman Alma Adams represents North Carolina’s 12th Congressional District (Charlotte) and serves as Vice Chair of the House Committee on Agriculture. Additionally, she serves on the House Financial Services Committee and the House Education &

Labor Committee, where she serves as Chair of the Workforce Protections Subcommittee. In 2015, she founded the Adams Hunger Initiative to address food insecurity across Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, and the 12th Congressional District.

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